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Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 10260 061544Z

67
ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-04 /061 W
---------- 006525
R 061422Z NOV 74
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6717
INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, NI, NG, ML
SUBJECT: VISIT
OF HEAD OF STATE OF NIGER TO NIGERIA

SUMMARY: NIGER HEAD OF STATE LIEUTENANT COLONEL KOUTCHE PAID HASTILY ARRANGED VISIT TO NIGERIA AND HELD TALKS ON GENERAL ISSUES WITH GOWON. AT PREDEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE, HE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR WEST AFRICA ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND SAID NIGER REFUGEES WOULD BE REPATRIATED. END SUMMARY.

1. NIGER HEAD OF STATE KOUNTCHE PAID TWO-DAY VISIT TO NIGERIA NOVEMBER 4-5 WHICH FEATURED EXTENDED TALKS WITH GOWON. WHILE NO COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED, PRESS REPORTED THAT TALKS CONCENTRATED ON BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ALSO SUCH TOPICS OF REGIONAL INTEREST AS WEST AFRICA ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (ECOWAS).

2. AT PREDEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE, KOUNTCHE PLEDGED CONTINUED NIGERIAN FULL SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED ECOWAS, AND PROMISED HIS COUNTRY WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT FORTHCOMING MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN LIBERIA AS WELL AS
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 10260 061544Z

MAY 1975 LAGOS SUMMIT. IN OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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OF MEETING WITH
PRESS, KOUNTCHE ANNOUNCED GOVERNMENT DECISION REPATRIATE
DROUGHT REFUGEES LIVING IN MALI AND NIGERIA WITH LAUNCHING OF
OPERATIONS "RETURN TO THE VILLAGES" AS RESULT GOOD
AGRICULTURAL YIELDS AND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

3. IN OTHER REMARKS, KOUNTCHE DESCRIBED GOF-GON DEFENSE
PACT AS "VERTABLE ANACHRONISM" AND DESCRIBED BOTH DEMAND
BY HIS GOVERNMENT FOR ITS REVIEW AND WITHDRAWAL OF FRENCH
TROOPS FROM NIGER AT GON REQUEST. FINALLY, KOUNTCHE
DESCRIBED HIS VISIT TO NIGERIA AS FOLLOWUP OF CONTACTS
MADE WITH AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AS WELL AS A VISIT TO
"SEE MY BROTHER GENERAL GOWON." THANKING NIGERIA FOR ITS
ASSISTANCE TO DROUGHT VICTIMS, HE ADDED THAT RELATIONS
BETWEEN HIS COUNTRY AND NIGERIA WERE VERY CORDIAL AND THAT
THERE WAS NO DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THEM.

4. SENIOR MEA OFFICIAL TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT KOUNTCHE
VISIT WAS HASTILY ARRANGED AT GON REQUEST AND THAT NIGER
CHIEF OF STATE IN FACT CAME HERE DIRECTLY FROM EARLIER
TRIP TO ALGEO A. ALTHOUGH KOUNTCHE AND GOWON HAD TALKED
ON PHONE BEFORE, THEY HAD NEVER MET. THUS, MEETING
MOST IMPORTANT FOR PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING PERSONAL
CONTACT BETWEEN TWO HEADS OF STATE RATHER THAN FOR
SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSIONS.

5. COMMENT: AS PRESS NOTED, VISIT FURTHERS PROCESS
OF NORMALIZATION NIGER-NIGERIAN RELATIONS FOLLOWING
COUP WHICH OUSTED FORMER PRESIDENT DIORI. FMG SET
STATE FOR KOUNTCHE BY ANNOUNCING DONATION ADDITIONAL
NAIRA 250,000 TO NIGER TO ASSIST DROUGHT VICTIMS ON EVE
OF VISIT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, FOREIGN TRADE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAGOS10260
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740319-0327
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741167/aaaacese.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISIT OF HEAD OF STATE OF NIGER TO NIGERIA
TAGS: PFOR, NI, NG, ML, (KOUNTCHE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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